

(o) "Local department" means the department of social services that has jurisdiction in the county:

- (1) where the allegedly abused or neglected child lives; or
- (2) if different, where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place.

(O-1) "LOCAL DEPARTMENT CASE FILE" MEANS THAT COMPONENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CONFIDENTIAL COMPUTERIZED DATABASE THAT CONTAINS INFORMATION REGARDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS TO WHICH ACCESS IS LIMITED TO THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INVESTIGATION.

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(b) (1) The respective local departments throughout this State shall provide the information for a central registry.

(2) ~~EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN~~ FOR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION AUTHORIZED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, A CENTRAL REGISTRY MAY NOT INCLUDE INFORMATION FROM A LOCAL DEPARTMENT CASE FILE UNTIL ANY INDIVIDUAL FOUND RESPONSIBLE FOR INDICATED OR UNSUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT HAS:

(I) BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF ANY CRIMINAL CHARGE ARISING FROM THE ALLEGED ABUSE OR NEGLECT;

(II) UNSUCCESSFULLY APPEALED THE FINDING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED UNDER § 5-706.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE; OR

(III) FAILED TO EXERCISE THE APPEAL RIGHTS ~~WITH~~ WITHIN THE TIME FRAMES SPECIFIED IN § 5-706.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE, TITLE 10, SUBTITLE 2 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, OR THE MARYLAND RULES.

(d) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, and subject to subsection (e) of this section, a central registry may contain identifying information related to an investigation of abuse or neglect.

(2) A central registry may not contain identifying information related to an investigation of abuse or neglect if:

(i) abuse or neglect has been ruled out; or

(ii) the abuse or neglect finding has been expunged in accordance with § 5-707(b)(1) of this subtitle.

(e) (1) The Department or a local department may identify an individual as responsible for abuse or neglect in a central registry only if the individual:

(i) has been found guilty of any criminal charge arising out of the alleged abuse or neglect; or

(ii) has been found responsible for indicated abuse or neglect and has: